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ABSTRACT

A study was conducted to examine the literature on literacy and adult basic education and to identify various issues, trends, problems, possible solutions, and basic principles that might guide programs and policies in adult literacy and basic education in Canada. More than 120 documents were examined, raising such issues as what is literacy and functional literacy?; what is the purpose of literacy education?; what is the role of government in literacy education?; what is necessary for effective programming?; and what issues and solutions have been proposed? Some of the conclusions drawn by the survey were the following: (1) much of the discussion about illiteracy and functional literacy centers on the meaning of these terms, especially in the Ontario and Canadian context; (2) the goals and objectives of literacy programs must take into account the life circumstances of the participants and strive to move participants out of poverty; (3) participants' viewpoints and life-styles must be considered in planning and implementing programs to reach goals; (4) training of adult literacy teachers is needed; (5) research in literacy is valuable and more is needed; (6) government-produced materials need to be written in simpler language; and (7) since the process of literacy education is a complicated one, policy choices must be made and strategies implemented to link the public, private, and educational sectors in programs to combat illiteracy. (KC)

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by James A. Draper

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RE-THINKING ADULT LITERACY

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Introduction

The initiative for this study came from the Ministry of Colleges and Universities, Government of Ontario. Out of the literature survey on literacy and adult basic education provided by the Ministry, the task was to examine this material and identify various issues, trends, problems, possible solutions and basic principles which might guide programs and policies in adult literacy and basic education. The content and conclusions of this Report are therefore confined to the materials provided. However, the more than 120 documents that were examined seemed to provide a rich and varied amount of information, to a great extent covering the field of ABE and literacy. It should be pointed out as well that the project was never intended to be all-inclusive. Rather, representative ideas, principles and programs were sufficient in order to understand more fully the adult functional illiteracy issue in Ontario, and more broadly, in Canada.

The Report makes little attempt to establish the extent of adult illiteracy and functional illiteracy in Canada, since this fact has already been acknowledged and established. For instance, the reader might wish to refer to the Canadian Commission for Unesco's document Adult Illiteracy in Canada: A Challenge, prepared by Audrey M. Thomas (1983).

This Report is divided into six parts, under the headings of: Definitions: The Basis for Discussion; Function and Purpose of Literacy Education; The Concern for Policy and the Role of Government; A Background to Effective Programming; Issues and Solutions: Meeting the Challenges of ABE; and finally, Interpretation and Implications. Generally speaking, the first five sections present the programs, findings of research, and general literature without interpretation or analysis. These sections attempt to present the viewpoints and findings of the various authors. In many cases, quotations are used extensively, in order to succinctly present an author's point of view. It is the last section which attempts to summarize, interpret, and identify the essence of what is being expressed.

Definitions: The Basis for Discussion

There is no dearth of material which attempts to describe and define such terms as literacy, functional literacy, adult basic education, and non-formal education. All these attempts are presented from various perspectives, intended to be relevant and meaningful in particular cultural, economic, and political contexts. To this end, the various ways in which terms are defined will differ. But there are similarities as well, in broad terms, as these relate to the concern for improving the quality of life and the reasons for living. It is the philosophical meaning, and the underlying values expressed, that are the essence of definitions. It might be argued that the methodologies, strategies, and processes for accomplishing basic goals are less important in a definition.

This section makes no attempt to broadly survey the various meanings of literacy and adult basic education. A few examples only are given here, as a way of initiating discussion and of laying the basis for the sections of this paper that are to follow. Additional statements about meanings of terms are expressed further in other sections of this paper.

Writing in the Canadian Journal of Education, de Castell, Luke, and MacLennan (1981) point out that "Attempts have been directed towards articulating a concept of literacy which is relevant to the more practical aspects of everyday life for society as a whole" (p. 11). The term currently used to express this instrumental perspective is "functional literacy," a term which is widely used in Canada and many other countries. "The apparent neutrality of the concept and the vagueness of its formulation, in conjunction with its pragmatic, utilitarian appeal, attract extensive approval" (p. 12). The authors point out, however, that "there have been few attempts to define the term rigorously. The Canadian Association for Adult Education (CAAE), for example, defines functional literacy in terms of schooling" (p. 12). The authors make the point that "functional literacy" in Canada must "consider factors peculiar to the Canadian context such as social/technological change, schooling policy and practice, social mobility and cultural character" (p. 15). That is:

> A contextually adequate definition of functional literacy, therefore, will consider not only the literacy demands of interpersonal and vocational practice, but also literacy needs for social and political practice as determined by the demands of Canadian citizenship. (p. 16)

The same three authors continue to attempt an understanding of the meaning and functions of literacy. It is their view that there is a need for a theoretical understanding of "literacy" and that this is necessary in order to understand the character and extent of literacy and "determine which methods and programs best facilitate literacy" (p. 8). Understanding literacy also determines the criteria which will be used to assess its achievement. Yet, the authors state, "preliminary investigations have revealed critical deficiencies in the literature concerned with data and definitions of literacy" (p. 8). Lastly, the authors express the viewpoint that the intent of literacy instruction in Canada must not be manipulative, characterized by passive acceptance of information and prescribed behavior.

Noor (1984) uses the term "basic education" in a slightly different way than usual. For him, basic education "is perceived as comprising planned activities in the realm of formal, nonformal, and informal education, and together these constitute the minimum package of attitudes, skills, and knowledge that every society asks from each of its members" (p. 8). "Basic education" includes communication skills and general knowledge, which at the basic level would include literacy (if possible); numeracy; general civic, scientific, and cultural knowledge; values; and attitudes. Other elements would include "living skills and knowledge embracing health factors, sanitation, nutrition, family planning, the environment, management of the family economy, and creating and maintaining a home" (p. 8). Production skills, embracing all forms of activity directed toward making a living or the production of goods and services, at whatever level, would also be included.

According to Noor, "This concept of education is not equated with a certain number of years of formal schooling. It recognizes, first, that the

character, amount and delivery of education necessarily differ according to the target audiences. . . . Second, it recognizes that the different elements of basic education are acquired over a lifetime" (p. 2). For him, then,

> Basic education is, therefore, a variable concept and a moving threshold. Depending on the level of advancement of a country, basic education serves two distinct roles, the implications of which may not be mutually exclusive. First, in many societies it constitutes the minimum requirement for survival. Second, in societies where the survival needs have been met, it constitutes the essential instrument for growth and development. (p. 8)

These few introductory comments lead next into a more philosophical expression of goals and purposes for literacy education, as discussed in the next section of this paper.

Function and Purpose of Literacy Education

Statements about the functions and purposes of literacy and adult basic education are based upon particular views of human nature, a belief in the ability of adults to learn, perceptions of what constitutes an "illiterate person," and the character and profile of the target population, that is, the undereducated adult. In order to deal with the problem of illiteracy in society, it is important to understand illiterate adults in terms of their personal context or environment in which they live, their life style, values, and aspirations.

This section further expands on the interpretation of illiteracy; the various causes of literacy and the relationship of this reality to socioeconomic factors; international statements and programs that are relevant to the Canadian experience; the compounded problems of illiteracy for adults in Canada whose mother tongue is not either English or French; the motivation for adults participating in literacy programs and the opposite of this, why a sizeable proportion of the adult illiterate population does not participate; the self-concepts of undereducated adults; the ethics of literacy education programs; research on the qualitative outcomes of literacy education programs; traditional and non-traditional approaches to literacy; and statements about the lack of research in adult basic education. Again, it must be pointed out that none of the above topics are discussed extensively. A few examples are given only, in order to illustrate a point or an issue.

Welsh-Hill and Roy (1982) point out that adult basic education has its roots in the social welfare programs of the late 1960s which were designed to help disadvantaged persons become employable and productive citizens. However, they go on to say that "There is very little experimental research in ABE and what is available is often lacking in adequate design" (p. 168).

Guthrie and Kirsch (1985), as reported in Kazemek and Rigg (1984) contend that the traditional perspective of literacy which governs research program development and adult literacy instruction is based on a set of assumptions not supported by research and experience. These assumptions are that "reading is not individualistic, singular, and dichotomous." Alternatively, "a social interaction perspective . . . contends that reading is not a static characteristic of the individual, but, instead, is closely tied to the environment, the social expectations, and the reading activities that others may expect. . . .

Thus a person may be literate in one situation and less literate in another" (p. 12)

Abdun Noor (1984), a senior educator with the World Bank, critically examines the international adult literacy programs to date and attempts to reconceptualize basic education. On a global basis, he emphasizes that the undereducated are often the poorest of the poor. Basically, literacy campaigns have attempted to combat the battle of ignorance and to spread adult education. However, effective campaigns "have been few, far between, and the results have fallen short of resounding success" (p. 6). For instance, he says "the programs require genuine and authentic political commitment, and not simple rhetoric in party manifestos. . . . Even when a political commitment may have been available, a well-intentioned program has suffered from admininstrative bottlenecks" (pp. 6-7). Noor also points out that not all societies place a high value on the formal schooling of their children.

Bhola (1981) speaks of the successes with literacy in Brazil, Nicaragua, Tanzania, and Vietnam. These various programs link nonformal education, literacy, and development. Literacy, used in these programs, is defined in instrumental terms as the ability to read and write in the mother tongue or in a national language. Numeracy, the ability to deal with numbers at a primary level, is typically considered part of literacy. Bhola speaks of the cognitive, social, and instrumental effects of literacy, the latter item referring to the uses to which literacy is put. The kinds of literacy are differentiated as cognitive, economic, policital, social, cultural, and ideological. He emphasizes how important the relevance of the social milieu is to the process of learning. He also emphasizes the effects that literacy has, and is intended to have, on the family, one's community, and society. "Literacy underlies the modernization process and is a human right" (p. 15). Dialetical relationships are important in the process of change. A number of these literacy programs have also used the media, including radio, in support of these educational programs. In his article, Bhola makes an important philosophical point. He says that "illiteracy need not be equated with ignorance, while at the same time ignorance is an unsatisfactory condition" (p. 8).

Mahaffy (1983), in his study of Impact Evaluation of ABE Program Outcomes, says that both the qualitative and economic aspects affect students' lives. He concludes that:

> Concern with cost effectiveness should not be allowed to detract from the fact . . . that many of the benefits which appear to result from the ABE program are not of a monetary nature. The overall quality of life, in almost every dimension, seems to have improved for the students having attended and left the ABE program. As the quality of students' lives increases, so probably, does the quality of the lives of their families. . . . The impact of ABE, like most other forms of education, doubtless reaches far beyond the classroom. (p. 76)

However, he goes on to say that "while the positive changes in students' lives appear to be closely associated with participation in the ABE program, the data do not permit concluding that the ABE program caused these changes. As with most research of this type, only an association can be demonstrated" (p. 77).

Kazemek discusses adult literacy education as an ethical endeavor. She points out that "many of John Dewey's ideas concerning ethics and the

universalization of democratic habits of thought and action are especially relevant to a discussion of adult literacy as a means of developing social intelligence in a democratic society" (p. 1). She goes on to say that:

> The implication of a basic faith in people's ability to reflect and decide what is good for them in the structure of adult literacy programs are various. For example, this basic faith means that program developers and literacy teachers must come to grips with the individual's, community's and instructor's beliefs, mores, and perceptions of reality, as well as the manner in which these overlap and interact. (p. 1)

The research by Clark and associates (1982) studied the self-concepts and occupational aspirations of adult basic education students. They point out that one cannot accept that students entering the literacy program have positive self-concepts. Some may, in fact, have low or negative self-concepts. If self-concept is not assessed and dealt with, then cognitive learning may be hampered. In their review and study of self-concepts of ABE students, they concluded that such self-concepts were far below the average self-concepts of the general population. Causes of low self-concept among ABE students sometimes relate to negative experiences while students in the public schools.

In 1984, Amoroso undertook a study in the United States which investigated adult motives for acquiring literacy, concepts about the nature of the learning process, and expectations about the teacher's role and the learner's role in the process. Among other things, for the adult learners, "literacy symoblized a hope or a dream of self-worth and independence," of "becoming someone" (p. 11). When asked how they dealt with the remoteness and authoritarian attitude of their teacher, the adult students said that "they lost all respect for them as persons. And, school became an unsafe place to be" (p. 12). The students also expressed strong feelings about the process and expectations about learning. For example: "Anyone who wants to learn can learn by someone who cares" (p. 19). All were unanimous in their insistance that "literacy teachers be emotionally involved with their students." From this study, the need for teachers to be caring and supportive is central to the concept of literacy as "an act of becoming a person."

In discussing the functionally illiterate worker and public policy, Adams (1982) points out that undereducated adults who do not have command of the English language are also likely to be employed in low level, poor paying, dead-end jobs. Furthermore, "They are likely to be caught up in a milieu of poverty and despair which because of their disabilities of langauge and general education they have little prospect of escaping" (p. 9). He also states that "There is, in fact, a strong link between educational level and proneness to poor health. These interlinkages increase social costs to Canadians as a whole" (p. 10).

Canadian literature on literacy and basic education seldom describes the roles of educators or the outcomes of literacy programs as an act of liberation. However, if one examines the various international statements, one can see the relevancy of these to the goal of adult basic education in Canada. Such statements put the act of educating in a larger, universal context. These statements take us beyond content and methodology, presenting these as processes. For instance, the Declaration of Persepolis (1975) states that literacy is:

> . . . not just the process of learning the skills of reading, writing and arithmetic, but a contribution to the liberation of man and to his full development. Thus conceived, literacy creates the conditions for the acquisition of a critical consciousness of the contradictions of society in which man lives and of its aims; it also stimulates initiative and his participation in the creation of projects capable of acting upon the world, of transforming it, and of defining the aims of an authentic human development. It should open the way to a mastery of techniques and human relations. (p. 2)

The 1982 Udaipur (India) Literacy Declaration also emphasizes that literacy is a human right, and speaks of "Literacy for All by the Year 2000." Statements from Canada which stress the moral issues of illiteracy have also been developed and circulated by World Literacy of Canada and the Movement for Canadian Literacy.

Continuing the discussion on the purposes of literacy, Audrey Thomas (n.d.) points out that it is clear from the literature that literacy is a means, not an end in itself. Furthermore, "Literacy contains many skills, not only reading and writing. Literacy is a tool for self-fulfillment. Literacy involves participation of the learner and leads to participation in society" (p. 8).

A number of authors have stated that there is no one single standard of literacy for all people. Szwed, for instance, as reported in Kazemek and Rigg (1984), says "there is a 'plurality of literacies' based on the particular social context and the individual's needs, purposes, and motivations for reading and writing within that context." He maintains that "we must move beyond school-based notions of literacy which view reading and writing as abstract, decontextualized skills. We must attempt to discover the social meaning of literacy in ordinary life activities" (p. 12).

Also reported in Kazemek and Rigg (1984), Coles and Coppel contend that there are three main reasons for the continuation of widespread adult illiteracy in the United States. The problem of illiteracy has not been addressed with adequate funding of literacy programs; it has been approached as if it were separate from other social problems, and has been dealt within and of itself; and it has not remained in the forefront as a conspicuous, explicit concern, especially at the local level. The authors point out the strong relationships among illiteracy, poverty economics, politics, and unemployment and maintain that those who have the least are the ones getting the least. "Locked in place, their low literacy and job skills become the ideological rationale that explains why the undereducated poor are in their place in the first place" (p. 12).

A number of points have been made in this section which relate to the establishment of policies in adult basic education and literacy, and these points are further elaborated upon in the section that follows.

The Concern for Policy and the Role of Government

Within this section are a number of ad hoc statements from the literature which emphasize the need for policy statements; the implications of official policy on literacy and adult basic education, for instance on such things as the standardization of tests and materials and the certification of literacy teachers; specific statements and programs of the Government of Ontario; literature that attempts to predict the extent of illiteracy in the future and the resources that will be needed in order to deal with illiteracy, including its relationship to poverty and unemployment; the importance of linking initial literacy programs with follow-up programs, and of building this link into policy statements; the role of various government ministries; and the implications of all these to government and private-sector policy.

Recently, several commissions and task forces in Canada have addressed the problem of literacy, highlighting the need for policy developments. The Adams (1982) article is a good overview of these events, indicating an increasing awareness of the extent of illiteracy in Canada, making one realize that this is not exclusively an "educational" problem. Adams concludes that "A coalition of concerned institutions such as literacy councils and trade unions could be of great service by developing a strategy to keep the issue before the public" (p. 16).

An article on literacy in the Toronto Star, November 25, 1984, pointed out that there has never been a coherent policy on adult basic education or adult basic literacy in Ontario:

> While the motivation is there, funding is not. Ministry funding is locked into the system where 15 students will generate one teacher. But most experts agree that adult literacy instruction works best on a one-to-one basis. Also, child care and transportation allowance is often necessary and, perhaps most importantly, community outreach to encourage adults to come out.

Mention was made of the schools having to recognize the problem of adult illiteracy. The article also pointed out that the Toronto Board of Education, in October 1984, had convened a task force, made up of teachers, board staff, trustees, and community workers, with a directive to look at the problem of illiteracy and devise a strategy. Although the article did not specifically mention the Ontario Ministry of Education's 1981 publication, Continuing Education: The Third System, it should be noted that adult basic education was stated as a priority of the government.

The March 1983 issue of Continuing Education, published jointly by the Ontario Ministry of Education and the Ontario Ministry of Colleges and Universities, outlined a new joint policy statement, making adult basic education a prime objective. The purpose of the statement was to undertake the responsibility of bringing those with less than grade 8 level of education to the point where such persons can function in society, including finding employment. The statement points out that the Ministries have been supporting literacy for many years. What is different about this new policy statement is the definition of the problem and the method. The statement defines three kinds of basic education: literacy and numeracy courses for those who cannot read or do simple arithmetic; courses in English or French as a second language for those adults who cannot function in either of Canada's official languages; and citizenship and language training, again for newcomers.

The above statement "strongly suggests that boards [of education] seek co-operation with colleges of applied arts and technology and, for the first time on literacy programs, . . . suggests board consultation and co-operation with interested community groups." What is noticeable here is the call for increased involvement at the local levels, and not just among the traditional institutions of education. The statement also refers to the establishment of standards for both students and instructors, encouraging the availability of trained personnel for continuing education, "either through the faculties of education or through other appropriate institutions" (p. 1). In relation to the larger literature in this field, the statement raises a number of issues and underlying assumptions, including the question of standardization of materials and test results; the certification of personnel; and the qualifications of selected institutions to do one or both functions.

Other involvements in ABE of the Ontario Ministry of Education include the funding of the development and publication of a bilingual directory of adult basic literacy programs in the province. As well, the Correspondence Branch of the Ministry is currently developing a distance education program in basic literacy and numeracy skills for adults, thus substantially increasing the access of adults to literacy programs, using audio cassettes supported by print and visual materials.

A report produced by the Canadian Congress for Learning Opportunities for Women (CCLOW) by D. MacKeracher (1979) especially examined the issues related to the disadvantages experienced by functionally illiterate or undereducated women. The report is presented as a model for policy development. Among other things, the report points out that:

> Public policy statements and formal legislation do not explicitly provide for basic education as the right of every adult living in Canada. The result is that adult basic education services are generally provided as voluntary services, as social welfare services, as remedial services, rather than as an integrated part of adult education services. (p. ii)

The publication, and that of De Coito (1984), identify a number of vital issues and offer recommendations dealing with these issues.

In 1984, the Canada Employment and Immigration Commission (CEIC) attempted to assess current priorities and the adequacy of existing approaches to the problems of adult illiteracy and undereducation in Canada. One aspect of direct relevance to federal and provincial manpower and education agencies is the implication for existing training/skill development initiatives. From the point of view of the CEIC, for example, the finding "raises questions in terms of the recent reorientation under the National Training Act to move support away from basic training toward higher order skill development, targetted on priority areas of national occupational demand" (pp. 2-3). Having said this, the document concludes that "the more recent figures [on adult literacy/functional literacy] suggest an overall trend towards an improvement in literacy levels, with enrolment projections indicating that declines in the percentage of the population with educational attainment levels of less than grade 9 likely to continue until at least 1990-91" (p. 5).

In his extensive study of research needs and priorities in Ontario through to 1987, John Murray (1982) reports that roughly one-third of the respondents expected important decisions to be made concerning basic literacy within the

next three to five years. Almost 50% of those persons interviewed felt that research into basic literacy be given a high priority: "this area drew the strongest emotional responses of all, especially from employers, but also from educators."

Conti (1982) documents some of the outcomes of a conference which took place in Texas in the early 1980s. Among other things, conference participants looked at ABE in the 1980s, examining both the process and content of literacy, the goals for literacy, and various strategies for goal achievement. A balanced and fair funding source, and utilization of the existing delivery systems, were called for. There was also an expression that the purpose of ABE needed to be clarified, since there was not a consensus on this. However, there was agreement that in discussing the purpose of ABE, the nature of the curriculum, the appropriate outcomes of the program, and the makeup of the target population would need to be taken into consideration when planning programs. Continuous staff development was also seen to be essential. Finally, the strategies for implementing the goals of literacy fell in the categories of legislative activity, improved communications, and developing a strong state professional association. Identifying supportive legislators and using professional lobbyists were also mentioned, thereby attempting to influence political decisions about adult literacy and ABE.

Comparable feelings to the above were expressed at a "Think Camp" in British Columbia, organized in 1983 by the Movement for Canadian Literacy. One conclusion of the working group was the governments (federal, provincial, and municipal) and public institutions (especially schools and colleges) have a responsibility to make literacy education available. Policy and funding arrangements need to make possible work that is defined on the basis of peoples' real needs for literacy in the situations in which they live. However, in a 1980 survey of adult basic and literacy education teaching and support programs within selected colleges and universities in Canada, Draper and Clark (1980) concluded that only limited efforts were being made by these institutions to support the efforts to eradicate illiteracy in Canada.

A number of authors stress the importance of follow-up, of the availability of written material for neo-literates, as well as the distribution and other services, and also a co-ordinating network. On this topic, Lazarus (1982) makes the point that, "Not only should the ministry of education be involved [in literacy and follow-up] but other ministries, such as those responsible for culture, communications, agriculture, industry and planning. Non-governmental organizations can also play useful roles, both supportive and educative" (pp. 68-69).

The section which follows illustrates some of the issues relating to developing and sustaining literacy and adult basic education programs, as a way of illustrating the kind of detail that would be required in establishing policy and extending a commitment to adult literacy programs.

A Background to Effective Programming

Up until now, the literature presented has progressed from attempts to define literacy and its implicit and explicit characteristics, as well as the intended and desirable outcomes of literacy and adult basic education programs. Following from this, a number of statements were cited that emphasized the

need for co-ordinated policies that, on the one hand, would acknowledge the social and economic implications of having a sizeable proportion of society functionally illiterate, while on the other hand, the need for policy that will commit greater resources to eradicating the problem of illiteracy.

This present section now attempts to present some of the specific issues that need to be understood in developing effective literacy programs. Topics covered briefly include the reasons for the success or lack of success in developing viable adult basic education programs, including the related issues of recruiting the hard-to-reach adult illiterates; ideas for achieving the goals of adult literacy education; the conclusions of selected research as well as statements that call for more research; the marginality of adult literacy, and the comparable marginality of undereducated adults, when compared to the dominant society; limtiations of established educational institutions in dealing with problems of illiteracy; the need for innovative and co-ordinated literacy programs as well as the need for appropriate support services to these programs; the pros and cons of computer assisted programs in literacy; and brief statements on career development and in-service training.

Lindsey and Jarman (1984) refer to a 1977 review of literature on ABE which concluded that ABE had made only limited progress in promoting adult literacy in the United States. Three main reasons were cited for this limited success: (1) some of the program descriptions were misleading; (2) empirical evidence was needed as to the validity of certain teaching materials and techniques; and (3) little research provided information about the reading process of illiterate adults. However, an updated review of literature (1977-1983), done by the two authors, concludes that significant progress has been made in ABE research efforts since 1977. The authors feel that future studies should consider ABE program objectives, addressing such questions as: Why are millions of illiterate adults refusing to attend ABE programs? and Should ABE in the USA continue to insist that all enrollees strive for a general education or high school diploma? In conclusion, Lindsey and Jarman suggest that further investigation should focus on the recruitment of ABE students and the completion rate in various programs and studying "the validity of instruments used to determine illiterate adults' reading characteristics as well as those used to evaluate ABE programs' successes and failures" (p. 612). Individualized ABE programs also need to be redesigned to meet the needs of the people in their communities. Finally, "ABE educators should establish research designs and obtain baseline data before programs begin so that they can obtain valid data as students complete or leave a program" (p. 612).

In his article, Heaney (1983) speaks of the marginality of adult education and illiteracy, and makes the point that to take literacy seriously means to take risks. One cannot depend on amateurs to solve the problem. He goes on to say that the differences in programs that work has less to do with techniques or strategy than it has to do with aim or purpose. Many systems are based, he says, on a "technological model," and unless the system can be flexible, they are not likely to be overly effective in the field of ABE.. He feels that linking learning with jobs "has led professional educators and their clients down the primrose path" (p. 62). When speaking about ABE programs for migrants in the United States, he says that marginal adults know that education alone will liberate few migrants from undervalued, underpaid work. They require the skills that will enable them to understand that their social and economic position is not the result of personal failure or underachievement in school.

Such adults need skills of critical analysis and organization, not merely workplace English, good work habits and technical competence.

The challenge to achieve the above goal is always with us and there are dangers and barriers inherent in the process, including the balance that is required in programs within educational institutions. For instance, O'Connor (1982) points out that "One of the problems a number of participants have encountered is that the vocational schools they attended placed so little emphasis on the academic subjects, that they were graduated with skills, but functionally illiterate" (p. 2). The literature begs us to ask what additional imbalances or inconsistencies exist within our educational systems.

Venezky, reported in Kazemek and Rigg (1984), argues that there is a chasm between adult literacy needs and the literacy instruction in schools. "Adults need a certain set of literacy skills for success in everyday life: for work, for citizenship, and for recreation. The schools are teaching something else. . . . In even simpler terms, the schools are not stressing reading, but literacy appreciation" (p. 5).

The British Columbia ABE Articulation Draft White Paper (1984), compiled by Audrey Thomas, points out that, "Adult basic education is a field, not a subject" (p. 8). Since the field has become fragmented, what is required is:

> . . . a simplified system or framework into which the various existing programs may fit without threatning institutional autonomy or the variety of delivery alternatives. . . . A commonly accepted framework would aid student transfer, enhance course rationalization, provide a basis for adult certification and enhance the understanding and possibly the support of the various funding agencies. (p. 8)

This and other statements raises a number of questions that have implications for going in the direction of standardization and certification, and one might assume that these issues will need to be dealt with squarely within the foreseeable future. For instance, the Articulation Development Committee recommends a four-level concept of adult basic education, ranging from ABE Fundamental to ABE Advanced.

A review of the literature shows that recruitment and retention of adult learners in basic education programs continues to be of concern. Lane (1983) concludes his own research by summarizing a number of points and giving some advice, that is:

> Research has shown that current ABE programs are ineffective at recruiting and retaining students. A change in emphasis is recommended to involve more functionally illiterate adults in basic education classes. To aid in recruitment, decentralization of instructional sites toward neighborhood centers, along with the provision of transportation and child care facilities, is recommended. To retain students brought into the program, the instructional process must be modified to relate to the needs of the client. Reading and computational skills can then be taught as tools to aid in the problem-solving process. (p. 91)

Fitzgerald (1984) asks: Can the hard-to-reach adults become literate? This question guided the author into research on why the hard-to-reach adults don't participate in literacy and ABE programs. Major reasons for not

participating included unhappiness with existing programs, shame, lack of motivation, and drinking-drug problems. Also, some stated that there was not a community-based program in their area. Furthermore, Fitzgerald states that "ABE programs focus almost exclusively on educational needs whereas the hard-core illiterate's most pressing needs are primarily of an economic, social and psychological nature" (p. 27). The author feels that ABE programs should co-operate with social agencies and organizations that are based in the community of the hard-to-reach because they are likely to have more experience in alleviating economic, social, and psychological hardships.

A consultation paper developed in Toronto (1982) examines the delivery of English-language instruction to adult immigrants and refugees in Metro Toronto programs and identifies a number of issues. Some of the issues include the need for support services such as child care and counselling, the co-ordination of programs, the effectiveness of course content, learners' eligibility for financial support, and the needs of special groups.

The use of computer assisted instruction (CAI) has been selectively made for years in ABE, but more research is needed in this area. One study by Buckley and Johnson (1983) concludes that, "CAI leads to significant cognitive and affective growth" (p. 1). Interestingly, the authors make a link between computers and the affective domain of learning and development. Along the same lines, Vinegrad (1983), writing fron England, says that microteaching can simultaneously function as a tool for research into the nature of learning problems and for the diagnosis of learning difficulties. In his study, programs were originally developed for use in an adult literacy centre for individuals with acute problems in learning to spell and read. The programs provide structural training on verbal material. For the benefit of indivdiuals with severe reading difficulties, a small interface has been developed that allows an audio cassette to by synchronized with the video display under the control of the PET microcomputer.

Kazemek and Rigg (1984) report on the work of Collins, who wrote about competency-based systems in adult education. Collins maintains that these systems or programs are "based on the questionable assumption that competency is something that can be grasped apart from the practical activity in which it is expressed" (p. 11). He argues that the pre-packaged guidelines and prescriptive methodologies of competency based programs ignore the fact that social reality is not fixed. He asks, "would it not be more practical to emphasize educating for intelligent flexibility rather than engendering more and more competency based lists to match new and ever-changing job specifications?" (p. 11).

Cervero (1981) points out that there has been a growing interest in the use of some form of competency based education programming. The claim by those using this approach is that the knowledge and skills of adult learners can be increased while at the same time know exactly what those graduates were and were not capable of accomplishing. In adult basic education, this approach to programming is manifested in the concept and program of the Adult Performance Level (APL), which is based on the claim that: "(1) the competencies necessary to successful functioning in adult life have been made explicit and, therefore, can be taught effectively in the classroom, (2) the APL tests can be used as exit criteria to insure that the learner possesses, at least at a minimum level, these necessary competencies" (p. 83). The author concludes by saying that there are promises and pitfalls in the APL approach as compared to the more traditional methods of providing basic education to adults. The value of APL

in the long run is the extent to which it encourages "more adults to enrol in ABE programs and acquire the skills and knowledge to fulfill the multiple roles of adult life" (p. 83).

In their research on the assessment of the impact of in-service education in adult basic education, Boggs and Travis (1983) found that such in-service education was beneficial to teachers. For instance, teachers often increased their sensitivity to learners and to the behaviors needed for successful interaction with ABE students. Part of the sensitivity is the understanding of the goals of ABE learners, including their own view of career development. Deems (n.d.) makes the point that "adults from disadvantaged backgrounds with limited educational experiences may have specific career development needs, since they are more apt to be unemployed, to be employed in lower-skilled jobs, to earn lower incomes, and to have lower career aspirations" (p. 1). Career development programs are important, and the author's publication provides guidelines that will assist with the development and implementation of these programs in ABE settings. He concludes by saying that "career development is a process, since it is the total of all work-related experiences that an individual has throughout a lifetime" (p. 1).

A great deal of literature has collectively arisen from the ABE program experiences within various settings, including the United Kingdom. From an analysis of these experiences, a number of issues can be identified, for instance, the importance of recognizing the link between adult literacy and the learner's physical, social, and economic environment; that all ministries in government should be concerned about adult illiteracy; questions as to whether the schools for children and youth are socially and individually relevant, since many drop-outs from schools eventually end up in ABE programs; and, similarly, a statement in the Canadian Journal of Education (1981) makes the point that "back to the basics" is not enough, since "literacy is more than a utilitarian preoccupation with such matters as correct usage, spelling and punctuation. Literacy means freedom which a developed language capacity permits" (p. 1). A number of persons stress the importance of developing post-literacy educational strategies, as part of a follow-up, continuing education program. More research is also needed, including surveys of attainment and progress of learners in adult literacy programs, using appropriate diagnostic tests.

Understanding the values and lifestyles of the undereducated adults and the reasons why so many do not participate in literacy programs is essential to planning suitable and relevant programs. The following section now illustrates specific programs that have attempted to be relevant and innovative.

Issues and Solutions: Meeting the Challenge of ABE

Having established the need for basic and literacy education for adults, and some of the considerations for implementing these educational activities, this section now gives examples of actual programs that have been developed and implemented. These examples are presented to illustrate how some of the basic principles and values, referred to previously, can be put into practice. At the same time, this section also identifies additional issues relating to the various components of ABE.

Some of the items which are selectively covered in this section include: raising public awareness about the problem of illiteracy; services available for special groups; considerations for developing learning systems and learning environments; the role of schools and colleges as well as other institutions, including business and industry, in ABE; programs of the voluntary sector as well as the role of volunteers; recruitment strategies; various integrated models of programming and intervention; alternative methodologies and strategies for the delivery of programs; indices for program planning and evaluation; examples of programs and principles from other countries, including those that use combinations of print, television, radio, and study circles in literacy education; reflection and action as well as the political component of literacy education; linking ABE to on-the-job training; and the place of self-paced instruction.

In speaking about adult functional illiteracy, the United States Secretary of Education, T.H. Bell (1984), notes that nationwide, illiteracy diminishes productivity and contributes to unemployment and underemployment. He also says, "Studies have shown that there is a direct correlation between illiteracy and crime. A majority of the Nation's prison population is functionally illiterate" (p. 2). Bell points out that the problem of illiteracy was enhanced because of a rapid advance in technology which raises the skill and knowledge levels required to perform well in society. He also discusses the financing of literacy, saying that, "In cooperation with the private sector, the Department of Education is conducting a national awareness campaign to recruit literacy volunteers and encourage private sector funding of literacy efforts" (p. 2). He points out that in 1984, "United States businesses and corporations will spend approximately $40 billion on programs to teach their employees skills which they failed to learn in schools" (p. 3). In order to achieve its goals for the National Adult Literacy Project, a number of pilot projects in the United States have been implemented, involving a number of colleges and universities. College students, for instance, now have the opportunity to take college courses for credit that involve teaching literacy skills to the poor. Bell says that, "There is also a commitment to encourage the coordination of literacy services for the disabled" (p. 11).

Noor's (1984) strategies for delivering basic education, among other things, would include the development of a unified learning system, that is, developing "A proper environment for learning,. leading to a unified learning system--where educational functions of all sectors and agencies conducted at different levels are fully coordinated and linked by a unified planning process--is the core strategy. Access to learning will be universalized" (p. 11). Believing that interaction within the members of the family is effective learning, Noor would treat the family as the prime target. Also, as part of his scheme, education would not be delivered in isolation from other development efforts. Finally, Noor points out that we can afford to accomplish regional and global goals, but only if we re-order our spending priorities.

As a way of developing a model of adult basic education for school boards, Herman, Draper, and associates (1982) developed a case study of adult basic education teachers and administrators, covering such topics as staff development, job satisfaction, and various aspects of the teaching-learning process, including curricula and materials, student involvement and assessment, evaluation, and feedback. Interestingly, the last part of the report of this study includes advice from teachers and also from administrators, based on their experience with adult basic education. The report also points out and

dispels the myth that illiteracy in Canada is an "immigrant" problem. It is not! Also outlined are the various ways adult education programs differ from regular schools for children. The value of this piece of research is that it allows teachers and administrators to speak. Some aspects of the "model" are that the ABE program accepts everyone who applies, there is continuous intake, the program is adapted to the student, and volunteer tutors are actively recruited. An extension of this initial project is a social service model of ABE developed by Herman and associates (1984). This study presents case studies of ABE full-time day schools, with urban and rural applications. There is evidence that such day schools for adults will continue to expand and develop into the future. Hence, this document is especially important as a way of understanding the factors for developing such effective programs.

There are a number of creative ideas for co-ordinating, implementing, and evaluating adult basic education programs in Ontario. A document which elaborates on these aspects of programming was presented to the Ontario Ministry of Education in June 1984. This report, titled, Community-Based Literacy in an Urban Setting: A Model, points out that the essence of this model is that members of a community share responsibility for providing basic education to local adults. Direction for the project comes through a volunteer board of directors, drawn from the local area and the involvement of adult learners and volunteers extends beyond the tutoring sessions. Three of the five persons authoring the report, members of the Toronto Curriculum Working Group (a committee of the Metro Toronto Movement for Literacy) were associated with the East End Literacy Program, an organization that is in the forefront of literacy programming in Toronto.

When looking for alternative and creative basic education programming, one must acknowledge the adult education program of Bathurst Heights Secondary School in Metro Toronto. The school offers an interesting case study of a sizeable day-time basic education program for adults. Much can be learned from studying such programs, including the administrative and counselling implications and support services required of a program of this kind. One might assume that similar adult day-time programs will continue to expand in Ontario, but further projected research needs to be done on this topic. Already, in Ontario, there are upwards of 75 high schools and 63 elementary schools that have day educational programs for adults.

What is encouraging, in reviewing some of the literature in the field, is the initiative that individuals and agencies are taking in reaching out to potential learners who are homebound. A good example of this is the Homefront Learning project (1980) in Vancouver. As a community-based project, an English-language training program has been developed to meet the specific language needs of homebound learners who want to learn English but who are unable to attend existing English as a Second Language classes.

Russell's (1982) research describes a study that was intended to discover and implement effective recruitment intervention for adults with less than a seventh-grade education, in order to improve the effectiveness of the recruitment techniques used by the New Chicago Adult Learning Center. A model of diffusion and adoption of innovation was used to engineer the appropriate intervention, to gauge the feasibility of implementation of the chosen intervention and finally to organize the evaluation of the outcomes. This study points out that "characteristically, reading and writing are innovations to anyone who does not have these skills already. These are skills that may

change one's life perhaps more dramatically than the adoption of another technical innovation" (p. 48). Russell goes on to say that the potential adult basic education student approaches the decision to learn reading and writing skills by the same process that persons normally approach any innovation or new idea. He concludes by saying:

> Knowing that the first step to ABE recruitment is to make the target audience aware of the availability and value of reading and ciphering skills serves only to motivate the educator to focus his attention on the awareness stage. The challenge lies in devising an intervention that will be appropriate (i.e., effective and efficient) in bringingabout this awareness. Interest, evaluation, trial, and adoption can then follow. (p. 49)

Remarking on methodology, de Castell and associates (1981) feel that "In response to the alleged literacy crisis, proponents of what might be termed the technocratic [educational technologists'] appreach have advocated the formulation of strict instrumental goals with an eye towards increasing the institutional efficiency with which these kinds of goals can be reached." They go on to say that:

> Indeed, with the overwhelming emphasis on immediate, empirically measurable objectives came a tendency to consider such short-term prespecified outcomes [behavioral objectives, skill acquisition, grade equivalency achievement] as conceptually adequate to guide research and development. The result has been an orientation among many reading researchers . . . towards implicitly behavioristic views of literate performance, reinforcing a view that institutionally measurable performance consists of a sum of precisely specifiable subskills. (p. 9)

Because the technocratic approach is "concerned with the manageable transmission of readily measurable skills, a simple quantitative index of 'effectiveness' (like standardized results) can be presented as a central component of educational self-justification" (p. 10). However, "such narrow definitions of performance have traditionally been opposed by progressive educators who recognized the need for a more comprehensively relevant definition of literacy" (p. 9). Contemporary progressive goals for literacy might include allowing "self-discovery and personal growth through creative language use" (p. 10). However, the authors say that this approach too is too vague when it comes to methodological guidelines.

There is a considerable amount of literature which documents the experiences with adult literacy in other countries, particularly new nations. The principles which guide many of these experiences and programs have relevance to programs in Canada as well. For instance, Atucha and Crone (1982) describe a participatory methodology for integrating literacy and health education in Honduras. The primary objective is "to develop a communications methodology for use in a programme that combines literacy, health education and family planning and that aims to improve living conditions and to increase the use of community resources and available services" (p. 70). The methodology for its participatory approach is based on concepts derived from J. L. Lebret and Paulo Freire, and is guided by three principles: (1) the skills to be taught should be of immediate relevance to the community and respond to actual needs; (2) literacy is not a prerequisite for learning new skills; and (3) the methodology should be based on the modes of learning that are characteristic of

illiterate adults, that is, upon how illiterate adults learn. The intention of the program was "to develop a 'model integrated programme' in a project area that will demonstrate the feasibility of this approach and provide a model that can be replicated and drawn upon for similar, nation-wide programmes" (p. 71). The activities of the model center on literacy study circles, whereby local people meet daily to discuss their problems and search for solutions, and at the same time, they learn to read and write. The generative words which guide the literacy program are chosen in relation to the concrete problems of the community in health, agriculture, and fmaily life.

Atucha and Crone expand upon the above principles and methodologies by saying that:

1. The educational approach, including the materials and the training procedures, must be functional. The programmes should relate to practical problems that illiterate adults face in their lives, helping them to gain a better understanding of the origins of their problems and to arrive at the best means of resolving them. The subject matter should relate to issues that the learners consider important.
2. The second principle also relates to motivation: the educational process should evolve so that the adult does not necessarily have to know how to read in order to understand the content. An assumption of many programmes has been that literacy was indispensable in the adopting of new ideas and practice. However, if one looks at the results of programmes based on this idea, it is obvious that in most cases they have failed.
3. The methodology thus emphasizes verbal communication, especially through group discussion, memorization for the retention of new information, and the decoding of visual images and simple words used as learning aids. . . . The messages to be conveyed relate to the themes in which an interest has been shown, as the members of the community play an active part throughout (pp. 73-74)

Finally, the authors point out that "reflection and action" are essential components of the "model." "In the literacy circles, the adults first discuss the meaning of each of the generative themes," for example, "the theme of refuse and its consequences in terms of environmental sanitation and health" (p. 76). Following this stage, "exercises in reflection are combined with exercises in literacy" (p. 76), and a variety of communication techniques and educational materials are used.

The program BBC/TV, which began in 1975, faced up to two features of the adult literacy program in the United Kingdom which had to be kept in balance, that is, the enormity of the problem and the psychological attitude of the non-reader. During its first year of broadcasting, the program had to appeal to a wide audience, including both readers and non-readers. In the second year, programming addressed itself to the non-reader unambiguously and gave the non-reader a chance to build up confidence in his ability to learn. Back-up services and provisions were essentail to a program of this kind, including a telephone referral system. The experience from this program stressed that television cannot teach people to read. The program encouraged people to participate in the literacy program. It was also recognized that audience size is an inadequate measure of the public satisfaction with programs. Other studies linking literacy and media point out that the television, and presumably radio, can be effective in gaining support from the public, to recruit literacy

workers, to complement written and visual materials, or as a part of a larger distance education program. A number of considerations are required in selecting the appropriate medium, and combinations of media, to be used, taking into consideration the influence of language and culture.

Foster (1983) writes about the ABE experiences in Scotland. He first begins by saying that the BBC, the United Kingdom central government and others assumed that "illiteracy in the adult population could be eradicated by a concerted campaign linking the media, local authorities and adult volunteer tutors" (p. 52). However, Foster points out that, in its 1979 report, the Scottish Adult Literacy Agency concluded that "the eradication of literacy skills were only one band of skills in a broad spectrum of revealed needs. Only a small proportion of the citizens, after four years of programming, were helped while the nature of the help itself had been limited by the nature of the program and the competence of the volunteers" (p. 52). The Agency stressed "the need for any succeeding provision to be broader and to concern itself with confidence-raising skills promoting self-reliance and knowledge which would enable people to make a fresh start, to feel they had more control over their lives, and could make a bigger contribution to their family, community and society" (p. 54).

Following from the above, Foster goes on to say that ABE programs should be flexible, and should aim to teach not only literacy, numeracy, communication and leanring skills, but social and managing skills as well. Literacy programs should attempt to assist adults to get a new start, to cope with a transition in adulthood and of allowing access to community opportunities, formal education, training programs, and employment. ABE programs need to adapt to changing social needs. Furthermore, basic education should not become "a form of provision identified only with departments of education, but has been seen as offering a style and process relevant to social work, health sciences, training and rehabilitation services, the media, community development and self-help groups" (p. 54).

In speaking about materials, the Scottish report points out that "methods and materials developed in ABE are now widely used in further education, in community education, in schools, in hospitals and adult training centres; by voluntary organizations, self-help groups and in programs run for the Manpower Services Commission" (p. 54). The materials are generally appealing to adults without being patronising, are pragmatic in content yet presented in a way that encourages success and confidence-building. "The methods emphasize a non-stressful learning process, egalitarian relationships, and negotiated programs arising from the students' expectations and the tutors' contractual agreement" (p. 54). The report says that there are limits to the demands that can be made upon volunteer tutors. It also says that the approach to ABE should be personal and responsive, helping people rediscover their potential as learners. Finally, from the outset, ABE has regarded feelings and attitudes as equally important as the enactive skills. At the same time, "for basic education to continue to develop, it must find ways of tackling serious and urgent issues in our society, like unemployment, hopelessness and poverty" (p. 59).

Other international programs discuss the wide use of volunteers in the educational process and the use of popular education and folk theatre as tools for developing critical social consciousness and creating motivation. All these are some ways of dealing with socioeconomic inequalities. Mexico's national literacy program, which began in 1981, made special use of television,

print materials, and radio. In its literacy program, Pakistan also used television and developed some interesting ideas about evaluating non-formal literacy programs.

Any number of literacy programs in other countries link literacy, basic education, and economic development. In Canada, much can be learned from these various programs. Within Ontario, an excellent example of how this linkage had been achieved, and reported by Shuttleworth (1983), is a program operated by the York Board of Education. The Youth Ventures Developments of Metro Toronto was established as a not-for-profit corporation devoted to community economic development, and "in June of 1981, Youth Ventures in turn approached the York Board of Education to request the services of a teacher to work with fifteen disadvantaged young employees in their waste paper recycling enterprise, Youth Ventures Recycling Incorporated" (p. 11). The teacher assigned to the project, who was given the title Academic and Life Skills (ALS) Coach, was to be responsible for individualized instruction in academic subjects, remedial upgrading, technical skills, vocational information, and counselling and life skills as required.

Shuttleworth goes on to say that what was initially intended to be a traditional teaching assignment soon became non-traditional. The teacher soon realized that since the business was a non-traditional learning environment, the "teacher" in turn needed to become involved in the day-to-day operations of the business. Through these involvements, his potential as a relevant teacher was perceived by workers.

Other experiences within the York Board are reported by Shuttleworth. In September 1982, the York Board established a new adult day school offering basic education, upgrading, and English as a Second Langauge. Because of the success of the experimental program, the education in the work place concept has now been extended to York Wood Works, an industry which recycles waste wood. Future plans include the establishment of a building renovation business and a clerical/retail service enterprise to provide temporary employees for local companies, agencies, and government offices. All of these business ventures operate on a not-for-profit basis, drawing financial support from Employment and Immigration Canada, public and private donations, and the sale of goods and services.

> Current data indicate that, of every five students beginning grade 9 in Toronto, only two will finish grade 12. It may be that the focus for the preparation of youth in the 1980s has already shifted from formal schooling to employment-related experiences. However, in these difficult economic times, employment opportunities continue to be limited or nonexistent. (p. 13)

Shuttleworth concludes by saying that "the integration of the job creation initiatives with on-the-job education services of the sort provided by the Academic and Life Skills Coach represents an innovative way to improve the learning skills of individuals who have not benefited from formal schooling" (p. 15).

As a way of "grounding" adult basic education, and making it more real and relevant to the learner, the literature on basic education refers to the need for on-the-job language learning and the need for planning on-site programs. Laylin (1978) describes one such project, the Jantzen project in Vancouver. He makes the point that:

> An on-site program facilitates maximum use of the work setting. Teachers can effectively incorporate the physical nature of the workers' job tasks into classroom activities, integrating appropriate language. The socializing aspect is another component vital to establishing satisfactory working relationships not only between workers and other staff but between members of all ethnic groups as well. (p. 38)

In terms of teacher orientation, "Knowledge of the work setting and sensitivity to language and culturally-related breakdowns in communication enable the teacher to determine and react to need in curriculum planning and classroom activities" (p. 38).

A working paper from the Ford Foundation (1983) gives evidence that "school dropouts will be the group most adversely affected by unemployment in the coming years" (p. 41). The paper offers some solutions, including the development of new relationships with business and educational institutions and the need to develop the basic literacy skills of dropouts and other high-risk youth. The document goes on to say that "the millions spent annually on adult basic education and on the remedial education components of employment and training programs appear to have had little overall impact on the nation's illiteracy problem" (p. 42). The Foundation paper says that current literacy programs pay insufficient attention to non-readers and to those reading at the 0-3 grade level, most of whom require one-to-one assistance. The paper reinforces the point that individualized, self-paced forms of instruction produce the largest reading gains, but that these gains decay quickly unless they are followed by job training. "When basic-skills instruction is followed by appropriate training or employment experience, disadvantaged youth achieve substantial lifetime gains in earnings" (p. 43). Finally, the document expresses support for a number of demonstration projects and supports studies of the effectiveness of competency-based and computer instruction in ABE.

According to Burnett and Sehnessl, employers in the United States now acknowledge that a sizeable proportion of their personnel are deficient in reading and related communication skills. As a result, there is a "resurgence of interest in non-traditional adult reading programs" (p. 33). For example, in business and industry, "there is a concern with training lower level technicians to receive and process essential information accurately, while at the same time there is a recognition that the higher level management and technical development personnel need assistance in the preparation and effective presentation of information to those technicians on line or in the field" (p. 33). The industrial and business sectors are aware that job-related needs must be met within a short time frame.

Adult basic education and teaching English or French as a Second Language are seen to have similar concerns as those relate to the role of the learner, recruitment, the need for innovative programming, and the production of meaningful and relevant materials. The link is even closer for those many immigrants who are not able to read and write in their own language.

The number of non-English speaking, or non-French speaking immigrants in the work place is considerable. In addition, statistics show that 42.3% of immigrants to Ontario during the first six months of 1983 did not speak either English or French, and many of these persons will be entering the work place. Hence, there is a need for even greater innovation of learning programs on the

job site. Already the experiences in Ontario are considerable, and English in the work place, offered on a part-time basis, is taking place in industrial and service sectors, including manufacturing, transit, hotels, hospitals, the public service, educational institutions, communications, and mining industries. In addition, for the first time, the Ontario Ministry of Education is offering English-language courses by correspondence, utilizing many non-school-based locations for learning English, including government and voluntary agencies.

The remaining part of this section refers to some of the services and materials which support ABE and ESL programs. One locally produced journal, suitable for new readers, is Starting Out, published by the Metro Toronto Movement for Literacy. It includes any number of topical and current items and attempts to reinforce and sustain the reader's motivation to learn.

Libraries can be ideally suited for housing school upgrading and ESL programs. For instance, in North York there is a program co-sponosred by the library, the North York Board of Education, and the Newcomer Services Branch of the Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Culture. Many libraries throughout the province have taken initiative in establishing literacy programs. In addition, the Owen Sound public library has published a manual for the establishing of a literacy program, as reported in the October 1984 issue of Feliciter, published by the Canadian Library Association.

An important supporting document to adult basic education in Ontario is the Out of the Shadows (1983) publication which is designed to assist those in communities who do not offer literacy instruction to actually organize such instruction. The publication outlines some of the issues involved in the creation of a literacy program and the special problems of rural areas, especially those far from urban centres. The question as to whether and how volunteers should be used in literacy programs is also discussed. In fact, the question of the role of volunteers in literacy education has been of long-standing concern. One must acknowledge that literacy education in Canada has a long-standing tradition of the voluntary sector and the use of volunteers in such programs. TVOntario, the producers of Out of the Shadows, has also produced a number of videotapes on literacy, with accompanying print materials. These are useful in raising the awareness of the general public about the breadth and the issues relating to illiteracy, as well as serving as training materials for those entering the literacy field. Another supporting document is the publication Working Together by House and Rabinowitz (1984). The accompanying three-part television series addresses itself to the volunteer tutor, teaching English as a Second Language, and teaching adults to read and write. What is especially noticeable about this and other materials is that it is a co-operative effort, involving many people with differing backgrounds and experiences.

The last section of this paper, which follows, attempts to identify the principal ideas presented thus far.

Interpretation and Implications

The literature presented in the preceeding sections of this report, and the wider literature on adult basic education and illiteracy, identify a number of recurring issues and concerns. This last section of the report now attempts to reflect on what has been said and to draw some conclusions from this. No

doubt much more discussion is required to further clarify and define these various concerns, as they relate to formulating and implementing policies and programs.

Definitions of Terms

Much of the discussion about illiteracy and functional literacy centers on the meaning of these terms, especially in the Ontario and Canadian context. Adult illiteracy as a social indicator very often reflects particular individual lifestyles, linked to the broader conditions of poverty, poor health, and unemployment or underemployment. As for the term "functional literacy," it is a relative term. In order for literacy education to become truly functional, one would have to identify the skills and knowledge an individual would need to have in order to effectively function in one's society. To this extent, functional literacy is individualized and is defined and characterized by a social, economic and cultural context. It includes, as well, the expectations that one has of self and society.

Linking the definition of functional literacy to the number of years of formal schooling one has completed has many limitations to it, since this does not fully take into account individual differences and experiences, or the specific contexts within which one lives and works, as referred to above. It seems clear that literacy education is more than a process of teaching reading, writing, and numeracy. There is also no one single standard of literacy for all people.

Goals and Objectives: The Outcomes of Literacy

A number of decisions need to be made about the "real" goals of literacy and adult basic education programs. On one hand, the intent of these programs is to improve communications and coping skills. That is, they are intended to teach content and technical skills, as well as skills for social survival. On the other hand, participation in such programs is an act of liberation, a state of becoming, leading to greater self-fulfillment and improving one's self-concept. One need not feel apologetic about describing the underlying philosophy in these terms. There are many examples of programs and statements that express these philosophical goals. When we are teaching literacy and communication skills to adults, we are also attempting to improve the quality of life of individuals and communities.

If it is generally true that being illiterate or functionally illiterate is a social indicator signifying that one is "multiple disadvantaged," then it seems reasonable to assume that the goals for literacy programs should reflect the lifestyle and context from which the learner comes. It has been firmly established that the problem of illiteracy is not an exclusively educational one, but economic, social, and cultural as well. "What do we in Canada want to do about adult illiteracy?" For many disadvantaged adults, a paralleling question must be taken seriously, that is, "What do we want to do about poverty and other gross inequalities?"

The goals of literacy programs therefore need to acknowledge that the participating adults are in a process of transition, intended to lead to an improvement in quality of life and meaning. Developing a critical social consciousness is an important part of that process. Furthermore, literacy programs, as will any goals for intended learning, need to be seen in the

larger context of lifelong and continuing learning. As one acquires literacy skills, networking relationships also develop. The entire process is intended to increase the independence of the adult learner.

The goals of literacy also need to reflect both the treatment and preventive approaches to dealing with social conditions. Attempts need to be made to teach basic technical and social skills (the treatment approach), while at the same time, make every effort to prevent illiteracy and poverty from re-occurring. Back to the Basics is not enough, nor is the legislation of compulsory school attendance for children and youth. All actions need to be supportive of each other, and not be seen in isolation to each other. Canadian culture is shifting from an industrial to an information society, and basic education programs need to reflect this, as well as other regional and international trends. The desire for education is based on learned values. Therefore, one goal for basic education programs is to reinforce this value, such that it becomes individually personalized. In the broadest sense, literacy education falls into the broader practice of nonformal education.

Finally, one problem of goals and objectives is that they sometimes dwell more on methods, processes, and strategies for achieving something than they do on succinctly expressing the underlying philosophical goals which are to be achieved. The following section attempts to summarize some basic considerations when attempting to plan for the implementation of goals.

The Planning and Implementation of Goals

Invariably, attempts to plan educational programs for illiterate and undereducated adults have been made in isolation from the larger "world" of the adult learner. There have been expectations that somehow, learning to read and communicate is the only agenda item to be dealt with, ignoring the adult's other concerns for daily living. The classroom needs to reflect the "real world," from the perspective of the adult learner. Emotions are part of the context for learning. An important decision to be made by policy-makers and administrators is whether literacy programs will be learner-centered or will merely be extensions of the traditional, formal systems, frequently focusing on cost effectiveness, efficiency, and administrative control. The two approaches are quite different, and they perceive and treat the learner differently.

Choosing the direction that a program wishes to go will determine the methods and techniques for learning, as well as the support services provided. In attempting to plan educational programs and to alleviate illiteracy, it is important to realize that we are not just talking about the teaching function alone. Planning programs also involves considering the production of appropriate materials, the training of teachers and follow-up programs. Furthermore, since recruitment and retention of adult learners is of prime concern, innovative ways need to be found to make the program meaningful. To this end, attempts are being made to associate such programs with economic improvement, for instance linking the program to the work place. Much can be learned from programs that have already taken this approach, but more needs to be done in this regard. Since the adult learner is concerned about creating some kind of economic stability, integrating on-the-job training with the basic education program can go a long way in meeting learner needs.

Providing support services to the learner is an "investment" in human development. Since the goal of basic education programs is to retain the learner in the program long enough so that he or she reaches a point of some

stability and independence, then providing child care services, transportation costs, outreach programs for homebound adults, and so on become important support services to that program. This is in addition to whatever the content of the learning might be, for instance, the development of job or home management skills or learning about nutrition. All these and other support structures are seen to be accomplished in co-operation with other agencies.

Training

A number of statements in the literature referred to the training and certification of basic education teachers. In some cases, this has been expressed as an issue. The certification of teachers does not necessarily result in better teaching, or a more sensitive interaction between the teacher and the adult learner. It can be observed that a number of school boards became involved increasingly with adult basic education at the same time that enrolments in schools were declining, resulting in a surplus of teachers within the system. A cause-and-effect relationship between these two occurrances may be coincidental. What is clear, though, is that teaching adults is different from teaching children, and non-traditional approaches are required in planning programs for the undereducated adult. Staff development becomes a fundamental part of basic education programs and needs to deal with reactive and problem-oriented responses; it must be anticipative as well, such that teachers are familiar enough with the background and psychology of the undereducated adult to be able to deal with unanticipated situations. It is important to have a firm grasp of what constitutes adult learning. This learning is seen as part of the continuing and lifelong education process as well. It seems important, too, to be aware that regardless of the subject matter being taught, there are common goals which are "universal" to all teaching and learning, for instance, teaching people to learn how to learn, and encouraging adults to become more independent as learners. Finally, serious discussion is necessary on such topics as the pros and cons of imposing standardization and certification into basic education programs. What are the "real" motives for developing policies in these areas? Are the policies learner-centered?

Research

Much of the literature reviewed in this paper illustrated the value of research, while at the same time emphasized the need for more research in the fields of literacy and basic education. It is important to further understand why specific programs are successful or unsuccessful; the extent to which teaching methods and learning environments are influential; matters relating to the effective use of volunteers; and much more research needs to be done on the follow-up of those who graduated as well as those who dropped out of basic education programs. It is important to know why a considerable proportion of the adult population in Canada does not participate in basic education programs. What are the needs of undereducated individuals and special groups?

Since it has already been acknowledged that innovative programs in literacy are in evidence, in Canada and in other countries, it would seem important to document these case studies in detail, in order to extrapolate the basic principles which guide the implementation and evaluation of programs. The assumption is that much that is being done in other countries has relevance to Canada, but we need to know more about what is going on elsewhere.

Finally, keeping an open attitude about what constitutes research and research design is essential. It would be a serious limitation if only quantitative research were thought to be respectable. Since feelings, attitudes, and opinions are part of the learning-teaching process, qualitative research is highly legitimate when attempting to understand the background, aspirations, and learning of the undereducated adult.

Material Production

In terms of the production of written materials, a number of contradictions can be observed. On one hand, government and other agencies often state that the materials which they produce are intended for the "average citizen." However, upon examining the reading levels of these materials, it becomes clear that they are written above the average capabilities of adults within this population. Attempts need to be made to rectify this situation, perhaps having someone within these agencies designated as reading "experts": people who will give consideration to the one person in five in the Canadian population who has difficulty with reading.

The Role of Government

Much could be said about the role of government in literacy and basic education, but one point only will be stressed here. The literature emphasizes that all ministries within governments, at all levels, should be concerned about and committed to dealing with the problem of illiteracy and undereducation, since all ministries produce materials for specific public audiences. For instance, a report recently completed by the Ontario Ministry of Labour focuses on literacy and occupational health and safety. Just as with the production of materials within each ministry, there seems to be a need for someone who will examine manuscript materials for their content and reading levels.

Other Areas of Concern

Many other areas of concern and issues arise from the literature, and each could be expanded upon in considerable detail. However, for the moment, these concerns will only be summarized. The process of literacy education is a complicated one, and deals as much with social action and reform as it does with learning to read and write. Policy choices need to be made, including whether or not literacy programs are to be learner-centered. Other statements express opinions and areas of concern: literacy education is a political act and the funding which is made available will reflect this reality; literacy enhances development and in turn puts a greater demand on the need for literacy and communication skills, just as more learning excites the need to learn; to be effective, dialectial relationships are important in the process of change and transition, and are essential components for learning and understanding; expanded efforts in Canada, including national campaigns, are possible and much can be learned from other countries about how to go about organizing such programs; teachers and adult students are really co-learners in a process of growth; co-ordinated and co-operative, multi-sponsored programs are to be encouraged, bringing together the private sector, government and non-government organizations and community-based groups; the ethics of teaching and administering literacy programs are no less important than for any other educational enterprises which focuses on individual growth; reading serves a number of functions and can be related to all aspects of one's life; the family can be an important unit in the learning process; the decentralization of

educational programs is desirable; to be innovative in literacy education means to take risks and to be experimental and a literacy clearinghouse is an important part of the support system for research and literacy programs.

It is also acknowledged that adult education, including basic education programs, can have a wider influence on other systems. For instance, influencing the goals and strategies for learning and teaching within other educational institutions, the work place, and various government and non-government agencies. Finally, given a social welfare model of education sometimes implies an attitude that the undereducated adult is a "patient," someone to be "treated." A progressive approach perceives the undereducated adult as someone who is willing and able to be involved in a learning process that is relevant and is linked to his or her immediate concerns for daily living.

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